

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 159 and 160 have been canceled by this Supplemental Amendment and Reply. Upon entry of this amendment, claims 143-158 and 161-171 are pending in the application, with claims 143 and 144 being the independent claims.

Claims 159 and 160 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. Applicants reserve the right to file further applications directed to the subject matter of the canceled claims. The claims have been canceled in order to avoid overlap with the subject matter being claimed in co-owned, copending U.S. Appl. No. 10/633,697. As this Supplemental Amendment merely cancels certain claims, Applicants respectfully submit that it is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.111(a)(2)(i)(A) and should be entered.

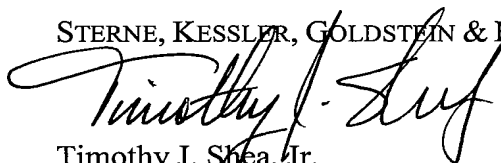
Conclusion

All of the state grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy J. Shea, Jr.", is written over the printed name.

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